

Chapter IV

Leadership in Technology Project Management

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses project managers' leadership styles, mainly from the perspective of technology projects. It starts by defining and outlining the need for leadership, and then describes the historical schools and the recent schools of leadership theory. Subsequently the focus turns to current leadership research in project management, and its related theories. Subsequently, the personality profiles of successful project managers in different types of projects are presented. The chapter ends with some managerial and theoretical implications, as well as scholarly challenges for further research and future developments in this area.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership and management are terms often used interchangeably in day-to-day business. There are, however, significant differences between the two.

Management refers to the *professional administration of business concerns or public undertakings* (Oxford Concise Dictionary, 1995). It is often related to guidance and coordination of

people towards a defined goal, through a person granted management authority by higher levels in an organization's hierarchy.

Contrarily, leadership is defined as *a relationship through which one person influences the behavior of other people* (Mullins, 1996). Discussions on leadership often refer to the sum of traits, behaviors and characteristics of people being followed by others, independent of their formal authority in an organization. Bennis and

Nanus (1985) define management and leadership and the difference thereof as:

To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have responsibility for, to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, and opinion. This distinction is crucial. Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things.

Parry (2004) showed that with increasingly higher levels in a corporate hierarchy the need for management decreases, whereas the need for leadership increases.

The project management literature, for example the International Project Management Association's (IPMA) Competence Baseline (IPMA, 2007, p. 86), refers to leadership as:

Leadership involves providing direction and motivating others in their role or task to fulfill the project's objectives. It is a vital competence for project managers.

This definition identifies leadership as a key competence for project managers.

The mission of the chapter is to provide insight into the current state of leadership research and contemporary leadership theories and their relevance for project management. The chapter shows the fit of different leadership styles with different types of projects, and its relation to project success.

The Role of Leadership in the Project Management Literature

While the management tasks of project managers are well described, leadership is rarely addressed in the project management literature. Sometimes team roles are applied to leadership styles, such as the well known Myers-Briggs, FIRO-B, Belbin, or 16PF (Bryggs-Myers, 1995; Schultz, 1955; Belbin, 1986; Cattell *et al*, 1970 respectively). However,

there is little correlation between competencies of leaders and commonly identified team roles and behaviors (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005), even though many of these are used as part of the recruitment process of managers and executives. Team roles are different from leadership styles, and only very few team roles and personality factors are correlated with leadership performance, according to Dulewicz and Higgs (2005):

1. **Belbin:** Only the roles of resource investigator and team worker are correlated to performance as a leader. The coordinator and implementer roles are weakly correlated to performance as a leader.
2. **16PF:** Extroverts and more emotionally stable individuals are likely to be better leaders. There is also some correlation with some of the other factors.

To understand the leadership role of project managers, we now turn to the literature on leadership, and then describe contemporary research results in leadership research in project management, and finish with theoretical and practical implications thereof.

LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of the literature on leadership theory and its relation to project management can be found in (Turner & Müller, 2006). The following is a summary thereof.

By doing a chronological review of leadership literature two classical theories of leadership can be found, dating back to 500 and 300 BC. More recently an early work on the function of the leader, and six different schools of leadership were developed. Research on leadership in project management was only addressed in recent years. All are described in the in the following.

As early as 500 BC Confucius identified the virtues (*de*) of effective leaders, which were *jen*

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